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SUBJECT: DRC and Rwanda Agree on Plan to Combat the FDLR

Ref: Kinshasa 1002

Combating the FDLR and GDRC-GOR Diplomatic Relations

¶1. (SBU) Following two days of meetings in Goma December 4-5, DRC Foreign Minister Alexis Thambwe Mwamba and Rwandan Foreign Minister Rosemary Museminali issued a Joint Communiqu (full text at paragraph 5) in which both sides announced a joint "comprehensive operational plan" against the FDLR. The respective Chiefs of Defense Staff reportedly developed the plan during preparatory meetings in Gisenyi. There are not yet any details of the plan, so it is unclear what the timeline for implementation is. A MONUC source told us that the GDRC and GOR will only share the paper with the international facilitation after several days.

¶2. (SBU) The communiqu also notes progress by both countries to re-establish diplomatic relations to intensify regional economic cooperation through the Economic Community of Great Lakes' Countries (CEPGL). The GDRC committed to reopen its embassy in Kigali, as well as embassies in Kampala and Bujumbura, in the first trimester of 2009. Rwanda agreed to the "immediate commencement of diplomatic relations" with the DRC.

FDLR Letter to Obasanjo

¶3. (SBU) On December 4, FDLR President Ignace Murwanashyaka sent Special Envoy Olesugun Obasanjo a letter, requesting a political dialogue with the GOR. Murwanashyaka claimed that the FDLR was not the cause of regional instability, rather Rwanda's interference in neighboring countries was the primary source. Murwanashyaka warned that increasing military pressure on the FDLR would only aggravate the situation, possibly increasing "the suffering of innocent civilians and increasing further instability in the region."

Comment

¶4. (SBU) DRC officials have been working behind the scenes for several weeks to improve relations with Kigali (reftel). The "4 X 4 process," which includes key decision makers on both sides, has seemingly made great strides since its first meeting in Kinshasa in late October. Remarkably, progress has been achieved without any foreign involvement in the process, perhaps a sign that the two countries can solve contentious bilateral problems through their own hard work on the diplomatic front. End Comment.

¶5. (SBU) Begin Text of Joint Communiqu:

¶1. On December 4-5, 2008, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo and delegation of the Republic of Rwanda, led respectively by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the DRC, Minister

Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, and of Rwanda, Minister
Rosemary Museminali, met at Cap Kivu Hotel in Goma.

¶2. This meeting was a follow up of bilateral meetings held in Kinshasa from October 28 to November 1, 2008 and in Kigali November 14-15, 2008 between the two governments.

¶3. The Head of DRC delegation welcomed and thanked the Rwandan delegation for their participation in this meeting; that shows the importance they attach to the peace and stability of the region and the confidence building between the two countries. On her side, the head of the Rwandan delegation Minister Rosemary Museminali expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and the hospitality accorded to her and her delegation.

¶4. The DRC delegation briefed their counterparts on the general security situation in eastern DRC, and the two delegations exchanged ideas on issues of common interest.

¶5. A comprehensive operational plan against ex-FAR/Interahamwe was presented jointly by FARDC and RDF.

¶6. Both sides agreed on the operational plan against ex-FAR/Interahamwe prepared jointly by officers from the FARDC and RDF and called for its implementation.

¶7. The meeting noted the presentation by MONUC on how the humanitarian corridors are open and the effective cease-fire has helped in accessing IDPs.

¶8. The two delegations appreciated the progress towards the

KINSHASA 00001081 002 OF 002

normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations and regional economic cooperation. Rwanda reaffirmed its commitment to the earlier immediate commencement of diplomatic representations. The DRC committed to reopen Embassies with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi in the first quarter of 2009. The DRC will appoint their four representatives of whom three, except the Deputy Executive Secretary, will be announced on December 12, 2008 during the CEPGL meeting in Bujumbura to complete the administrative organ of CEPGL.

¶9. The DRC delegation informed the meeting that on December 8, 2008 in Nairobi-Kenya there will be a meeting between CNDP and DRC representatives under the auspices of the UN/AU facilitators to formalize the ceasefire and discuss the roadmap to peace in the eastern DRC.

10. The two delegations also agreed that the governors of North Kivu (DRC) and Western province (Rwanda) meet regularly to discuss the prevailing situation in their respective provinces and issues of common interests.

11. The meeting appreciated the role of the two facilitators, President Obasanjo and President Mkapa, in the quest for a solution to the crisis in the eastern DRC.

12. The meeting was held in a frank, cordial and fraternal atmosphere. The next meeting will be convened by Rwanda at a time to be mutually agreed upon.

Done at Goma, on December 5, 2008

For DRC Delegation
Minister Alexis Thambwe Mwamba

For Rwandan Delegation
Minister Rosemary Museminali

End Text of Joint Communiqu

GARVELINK